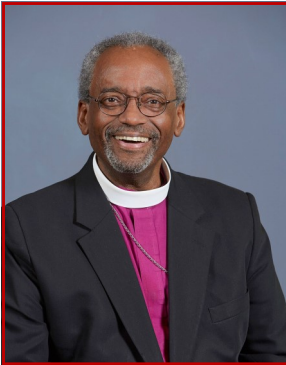




ST. PETER'S  
EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH

302 MERCHANTS AVE.  
FORT ATKINSON, WI 920-563-3889



Presiding Bishop  
Michael Curry  
Christmas Message 2020

*Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth receive her King; let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing.*

Perhaps like me, you've sung this hymn for years – in church, at home with your family, gathered with friends and neighbors. Perhaps you've sung it to yourself – in your car, on a walk, or quietly in the dark of night.

*Joy to the world!*

While we may not feel joyful this year – as the pandemic of disease continues to bring sickness and death, when fear and mistrust – a darkness – threatens to overcome the light – we, as followers of Jesus Christ must bear joy to this aching world. We must shine light into the darkness. *Joy to the world!*

Like much in our lives, proclaiming joy is difficult work – also good and essential work – especially now. Though we mourn that which is lost in our lives, our families, and our communities – *Joy to the world!*

While we strive to pull up the twisted and thorny vines of hatred and bigotry and anger – *Joy to the world!*

(Continued on Page 3)

THE STANDING COMMITTEE  
Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee

*We encourage the people of our diocese to pray for our nation on this day when we are plagued with much discord and violence. Pray for the safety of our elected officials, those protecting them, and the innocent bystanders at our nation's capital, and to soften the hearts of those who would incite terror in order to make their voices heard.*

Let us pray:

Almighty God, who hast given us this good land for our heritage: We humbly beseech thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of thy favor and glad to do thy will. Bless our land with honorable industry, sound learning, and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues. Endue with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in thy Name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that, through obedience to thy law, we may show forth thy praise among the nations of the earth. In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in thee to fail; all which we ask through Jesus Christ our rd. Amen.

(Prayer for Our Country, BCP 820)  
The Standing Committee of the  
Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee



## The Revelation of Glory and Truth

by Teresa Donati

We find ourselves in the week that celebrates The Epiphany, which the Church calls the revelation of the Incarnation. It is described in poetic glory in John's Gospel (1:14): 'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...full of grace and truth.'

He came to live with us, so that every life took on new meaning. His life gave the lie to all false measures of human worth, for he came as a baby, helpless and poor, and the 'star,' the beckoning finger of God, brought kings to worship him.

'Epiphany.' The beauty of the word hides its power, for it means revelation, yes, what was revealed to the Magi and the world. But the word also means a flash of discovery, a sudden enlightenment, a truth we had not realized until that moment. 'I had an epiphany,' people say, when a striking vision changes the direction of their lives.

The world had an Epiphany.

We forget ancient wisdom, insights that prevailed throughout the ages, but which we dismiss as impossible before the 'Age of Science.' We forget the realization of what the Epiphany meant to centuries of faithful people, who understood the day as a time to unmask the false pride of wealth and rank.

Shakespeare wrote a comedy to celebrate the day. Epiphany is also known also as 'Twelfth Night,' and it became the title of one of his immortal plays. In his time, that day in England was a day when rank and status were turned topsy-turvy, where servants could speak disrespectfully to their masters, where the low-born and poor of the world realized Mary's promise: 'He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly.' (Luke 1:52).

'Twelfth Night' is a play full of fun and confusion, a parody of the pretensions of the rich and 'noble.' Its characters show a reversal of servant-master roles. There are violations of the strict rules of deference toward lords and ladies. There is love directed and misdirected, though it all comes right in the end.

The play and its playfulness reflect the old wisdom about what the day truly signifies: the renewal of the message given from the time of Abraham, that God values the heart, and not the pretensions of riches or intellect. The Epiphany was understood to celebrate reverence for the sanctity embodied in an obscure baby, not an earthly monarch, but a heavenly one.



It was heaven's time for angels to sing to shepherds, whose humble work tending sheep was often held in scorn in the ancient world. And it all took place with no Roman ruler or puppet king in Israel, having any part of it.

Now, in that faith he taught, we follow the man that the child became. We know that His time with us resulted in a world renewed by hope, our souls exalted by a faith that every person, even the outcaste, could claim God's love.

His teachings and his healing would embrace the common people of the world and ennoble them. He would lead them to embrace lives lived with love, and those lives would be the light of the world.

Thus, Epiphany — wherein each person's soul could mirror the mysterious star that shone over the birthplace of an infant in a stable — a baby come to change the hearts and minds of all the generations yet to come. May it be so for all of us.

Source: <https://www.episcopalcafe.com/the-revelation-of-glory-and-truth/>

(Michael Curry—Continued from page 1)

Through streaming tears and gritted teeth – *Joy to the world!* – because God is breaking into our lives and into this world anew.

While this is a strange year, the ministry He gives us remains the same. We will prepare him room in our hearts by taking on the ministry Jesus demands of us: feed those who are hungry; welcome the stranger; clothe those who are naked; heal those who are sick; visit the prisoner. Love God. Love your neighbor. Sing joy into this old world. Prepare him room.

St. Luke writes of the first Christmas, “[Mary] gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” There, in the simplest bed, in the cool of the night, in a trough, in bands of cloth, lies the One for whom no room was made. And yet strangely, there lies the One whom not even the universe can contain.

*Joy to the world! The Lord is come.* In your hearts, in your homes, in your lives, prepare him room.

God love you; God bless you; and may God hold us all in those almighty hands of love.

**The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry  
Presiding Bishop and Primate  
The Episcopal Church**

Source: <https://episcopalchurch.org/posts/publicaffairs/presiding-bishop-currys-christmas-message-2020>

*Editor's note: A beautiful video of a carpenter/craftsman fashioning a manger using traditional carpentry tools, and the voice of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry giving this message is available on YouTube: <https://episcopalchurch.org/library/video/2020-christmas-message>*

*For ease of accessing this, I will include this video in the email this week.*

## VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING

January 31, 2021

Our Annual Meeting this year will be virtual. In order to have a quorum, we must have at least 20 people in attendance. For this reason, we will need to know in advance if you are able to attend virtually, either by the video Zoom or by calling into the Zoom meeting. (If you call in, you will be able to hear all that is said, and others will be able to hear you.) We will be sending out proxy/absentee ballots to those who wish to vote, but are not able to attend.

Please watch for information in the upcoming Newsletters and emails. An opportunity to R.S.V.P. will be forthcoming.



In the last Newsletter, we thanked Scott and Judy for decorating the Church for Christmas and those who contributed toward flowers. I should also have mentioned that 11 very special variegated Poinsettias came directly from Jack Schark, who drove all the way to Cedarburg to pick them up and deliver them here.

They were extraordinary...

Thank you, Jack!

## ÆLRED OF RIEVAULX – ABBOT (12 JANUARY 1167)

Ælred was born in 1109 at Durham, and was sent to the Scottish court for an education that would ensure his future as a noble and courtier. He succeeded, to the extent of being made Master of the Household of the King of Scotland. Nevertheless, he found success at the court of an earthly king unsatisfying, and at the age of 24 he entered the Cistercian monastery at Rievaulx in Yorkshire. Bernard of Clairvaux encouraged him to write his first work, *The Mirror of Charity*, which deals with seeking to follow the example of Christ in all things. In 1147 he became abbot of Rievaulx, a post which he held until his death of kidney disease twenty years later at the age of 57. His most famous work is called *Spiritual Friendship* (both it and the *Mirror* have been published in English by the Cistercian Press).



When Jesus was told that his family was waiting to see him, he replied, "All who do the will of my Father are my family." From this, some Christians have drawn the conclusion that the *only* kind of love permissible to a Christian is Charity ~ that is: (a) the universal benevolence that wills the good of all persons, and (b) the bond that unites the Christian with Christ and through Christ with all other Christians. Note that Universal Benevolence is extended equally to all persons (we are to love Jones because God made him), and that the bond of Christian Unity unites us equally with all our fellow Christians who are in a state of grace (we are to love Jones because Christ dwells in him). Neither leaves any room for particular friendships, for liking Jones more than Smith because Jones shares our interest in hockey, or because Jones and we like the same sort of jokes, or come from the same part of the country and have similar childhood memories, or because Jones is an easy-going type and it is easy to relax and feel comfortable around him, or because Jones and we have a special bond of friendship, loyalty, and trust. Particular friendships are *out*!

Some who do not think that every Christian must renounce particular friendships believe that every monastic must do so. In many religious houses, where the monks or nuns walk two by two into chapel or the dining hall or while pacing about during the daily hour of recreation, the superior will make a point of constantly shifting partners, lest anyone form a liking for one partner more than another. (This does not apply just to friends. It is sometimes held that no monk ought to allow himself any preferences in food or drink.) Against this view, Ælred wrote that it is compatible with the highest degree of Christian perfection to take special pleasure in the company of particular friends. He points out that we are told that Jesus loved John, and Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus, and that this probably means that he found their company congenial.

### PRAYER

Grant to your people, Almighty God, a spirit of mutual affection, that, following the example of your servant Ælred of Rievaulx, we might know the love of Christ in loving one another; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

### READINGS

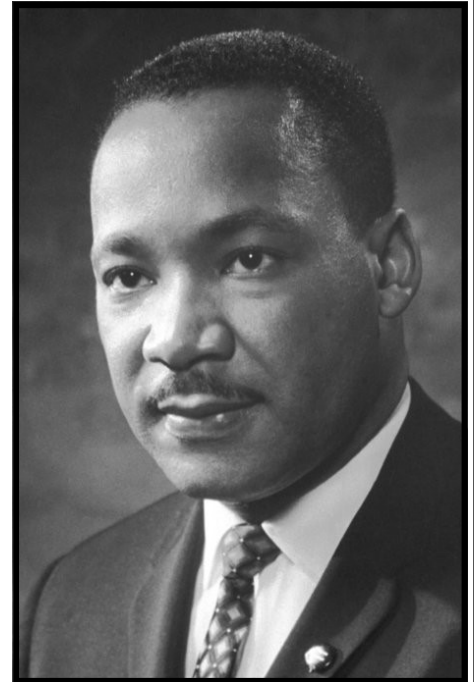
Psalms 36:5-10

Philippians 2:1-4 John 15:9-17

## Martin Luther King Jr. (Alternate Date—January 15)

**Martin Luther King Jr.** (born **Michael King Jr.**; January 15, 1929 – April 4, 1968) was an American Baptist minister and activist who became the most visible spokesperson and leader in the civil rights movement from 1955 until his assassination in 1968. King is best known for advancing civil rights through nonviolence and civil disobedience, inspired by his Christian beliefs and the nonviolent activism of Mahatma Gandhi.

King participated in and led marches for blacks' right to vote, desegregation, labor rights, and other basic civil rights. King led the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott and later became the first president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). As president of the SCLC, he led the unsuccessful Albany Movement in Albany, Georgia, and helped organize some of the nonviolent 1963 protests in Birmingham, Alabama. King helped organize the 1963 March on Washington, where he delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.



The SCLC put into practice the tactics of nonviolent protest with some success by strategically choosing the methods and places in which protests were carried out. There were several dramatic stand-offs with segregationist authorities, who sometimes turned violent.<sup>[2]</sup> FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover considered King a radical and made him an object of the FBI's COINTELPRO from 1963, forward. FBI agents investigated him for possible communist ties, recorded his extramarital liaisons and reported on them to government officials, and, in 1964, mailed King a threatening anonymous letter, which he interpreted as an attempt to make him commit suicide.

On October 14, 1964, King won the Nobel Peace Prize for combating racial inequality through nonviolent resistance. In 1965, he helped organize two of the three Selma to Montgomery marches. In his final years, he expanded his focus to include opposition towards poverty, capitalism, and the Vietnam War.

In 1968, King was planning a national occupation of Washington, D.C., to be called the Poor People's Campaign, when he was assassinated on April 4 in Memphis, Tennessee. His death was followed by riots in many U.S. cities. Allegations that James Earl Ray, the man convicted of killing King, had been framed or acted in concert with government agents persisted for decades after the shooting. King was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal. Martin Luther King Jr. Day was established as a holiday in cities and states throughout the United States beginning in 1971; the holiday was enacted at the federal level by legislation signed by President Ronald Reagan in 1986. Hundreds of streets in the U.S. have been renamed in his honor, and the most populous county in Washington State was rededicated for him. The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., was dedicated in 2011.

Source: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/05/Martin\\_Luther\\_King%2C\\_Jr..jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/05/Martin_Luther_King%2C_Jr..jpg)

## Whatever Is...

Kimberly Knowle-Zeller

*Finally, brothers and sisters,*

Keep me coming back to your people, God. Help me to see my neighbors as your beloved children.

Whatever is **TRUE**,

Keep your word, God, close. Keep me coming back to you for truth and wisdom.

Whatever is **NOBLE**,

Keep my eyes focused on Jesus' example to love and serve others.

Whatever is **RIGHT**,

Keep me centered on loving God and loving neighbors.

Whatever is **PURE**,

Keep the picture of the baby Jesus born in a manger close to my heart, the gift of God coming down to earth to know God's people.

Whatever is **LOVELY**,

Turn my senses to the gifts in front of me. Help me to see the beauty of a sunset, the warmth of a loved one's hand, a hand-written note, and a meal shared with family as signs of your presence.

Whatever is **ADMIRABLE** –

Help me to feed and clothe and care for my neighbors. Teach me to know when to talk and when to listen.

*If anything is **EXCELLENT** or **PRAISEWORTHY** – think about such things.*

God, I desire to know you more. I desire to hear your voice. I desire to sit in your presence. Meet me in the stillness. Come to me in the chaos. Bring me to the fullness of life found in your grace. Amen.

-Philippians 4:8 (NIV)

Source: <https://www.episcopalcafe.com/whatever-is/>



## PRAYERS

- Parishioner Cycle of Prayer - Barbara Elwood
- Ministry Rotation Prayer - Music Scholars. Pray that we will be able to gather in person and have our "choir kids" with us before too long.
- For those who are sick: Kitty Martin, Jerry Swanson, Jack Scharck, Bev Wille, Marylou Haight
- Diocesan search for next Bishop
- Prayer for difficult times (coronavirus)



**To add someone to the parish prayer list, please e-mail the office at: [office@stpetersfort.org](mailto:office@stpetersfort.org), or contact Eda Wilson, our prayer net coordinator, [edesw2@gmail.com](mailto:edesw2@gmail.com).** If you someone you know and love has Covid-19 we would like to pray for them. Please email Eda and she will add their name to the prayer list.

**This prayer was developed by the Diocesan Standing Committee to pray as the search for our next Bishop progresses:**

Gracious and loving God in whom we live and move and have our being, We pray for your guidance and wisdom that we may faithfully follow your calling in our own lives and as we as the Diocese of Milwaukee discern the calling of our twelfth bishop. We give you thanks for the service of Bishop Steven Miller in the life of our diocese and for the blessings that marked his ministry among us. We also pray for his family during this time of transition. We pray for those whom you have called to serve on our Standing, Search, and Transition Committees, and we pray also for those who will respond to your call to enter into discernment with us to be our next bishop. Give us all listening and prayerful hearts for this most important task. This we ask in the name of the One who said, "Come, follow me." Amen.

### **Prayer for a Time of Pandemic Illness:**

O God, our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, in this challenging and uncertain time of global pandemic and public health crisis, we come before you offering our prayers on behalf of those in need, the Church and the world. For all affected by the coronavirus pandemic around the world.

For the leaders of the nations that they may work together for the common good as the outbreak spreads. May barriers that divide be brought down and bonds of trust strengthened, to benefit the entire human family.

Grant to our nation and its leaders, public health officials and government the will to act swiftly and decisively, with wisdom and compassion.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers. Amen.

## OFFERING ENVELOPES

Our 2021 Offering Envelopes came in a little late this year, but they are now available. Please let me know if you would like to have yours delivered to your house by mail, or if you would like to pick it up yourself. If you call in advance I can have it ready for you out on the bench or just inside the door for "no contact pick-up". Thank You!

January 8, 2021 Newsletter

**ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

302 Merchants Avenue

Fort Atkinson, WI 53538

Return Service Requested



**ST. PETER'S  
EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH**

302 MERCHANTS AVE.  
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[office@stpetersfort.org](mailto:office@stpetersfort.org)

[www.stpetersfort.org](http://www.stpetersfort.org)

Rector: Mother Mindy

Valentine Davis

**ST. PETER'S MISSION STATEMENT**

To Lead Each Person into a Living Relationship with Jesus Christ,  
Train Them as Disciples, and Make Jesus Known to Others.